

## **Article 36**

### **TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

To the extent that funds have been appropriated specifically for tuition reimbursement, unless otherwise provided in such legislative action, the departmental employers agree to establish a system of tuition reimbursement for all departmental employees. However, effective for fiscal year 2005-06 and continuing through fiscal years 2006-07 and 2007-08 the Department of Corrections and the Department of Community Health will establish an account specifically for the purpose of tuition reimbursement, based on a ratio of \$4.00 per year per departmental employee. While there is no guarantee, it is the expectation that the allocation of such funds to Security Unit employees will be in approximate proportion to the percentage of total departmental employment accounted for by the Security Unit.

The departmental employer will notify the union, upon request, of the amount of money appropriated and allocated by the department, as well as any change in such allocations.

The administration of the program shall be consistent with the Civil Service Rules and Regulations, except as specifically provided herein, provided that no such reimbursement shall be authorized where departmental employees are on layoff from an occupation for which such academic pursuit is the primary preparation.

Selection among eligible applicants, and proportion of reimbursement, shall be determined by the departmental employer.

Tuition reimbursement shall not be made unless the course pertains to the employee's current occupation (such as criminal justice for corrections officers) or one in which the employer plans to seek candidates.

Procedures to be used for application, approval and verification of successful completion shall be established by departments. A department may require the employee to commit himself/herself to continuing employment with the department for a reasonable period after completion of the courses for which tuition reimbursement has been received. (Equivalency of work time for course work shall be considered reasonable).

The provisions of this article shall not apply in those cases where the employer requires the employee to take a course(s) as part of assigned duties.

Departmental employers will submit a request for an appropriation for tuition reimbursement unless, in the judgment of the Department, directives or guidelines of the Department of Management and Budget, or other budgetary authority, indicate such a request would be contrary to State policy.

The procedure for application for and award of funds for tuition reimbursement for Bargaining Unit members will contain the following elements:

1. Employees will be non-probationary and will be in satisfactory status at time of the application.
2. Reimbursement will be approved only for courses completed after January 1, 2005.
3. Employees shall certify that they are not receiving any other tuition payments, grants or stipends for the course for which reimbursement is requested.
4. The course must be job related or part of a job related degree program.
5. Reimbursement will be made after satisfactory completion of the course with a passing grade of at least 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, verified by a certified copy of his/her transcript or original report card.
6. Employee must verify payment of tuition with an original receipt.
7. Reimbursement to an employee is limited to the lesser of one course per term or semester or \$250.00, and shall apply only to tuition and shall not apply to such items as fees, books or supplies.
8. Applications will be processed in the order received, but no payment will be made prior to course completion and required verification.
9. The number of approvals during any fiscal year will be contingent upon availability of funds.
10. For Department of Corrections employees the tuition reimbursement form shall be completed and mailed to the Demarse Training Academy for approval and forwarding to the finance section for payment processing.